COMRADES.

NOW sadly the dirges are swelling
O'er hills that are dotted with graves,
And muffled the drums that are telling
A Nation is mourning its braves.

For some 'neath the palmetto sleeping,
For some 'neath the pine and the yew;
A truce through the years they are keeping,
Our boys of the Gray and the Blue.

And some under palm trees are lying,
From native land gone evermore;
The waves of old ocean are sighing,
And breaking in foam on that shore
Where shoulder to shoulder as brothers
They died to humanity true,
For Cuba's fair children and mothers,
Our boys of the Gray and the Blue.

O! Northland and Southland united,
To-day with our flag at half-mast,
The wrongs of a nation are righted,
One hope and one purpose at last;
For these are our comrades who slumber
'Neath blossoms the sweetest of May,
And lo, in their ranks do we number
Our boys of the Blue and the Gray.

—Ruth Raymond, in Good Housekeeping.

THE GRAVES IN THE OLD BREASTWORKS

By Francis Lynde

H, TOM, I do hope father won't go to law with old Maj. Loudon! It's bad enough as it is, but that will make it ever so much worse. I met Kate in the post office yesterday, and she pretended not to see me."

Tom Hartwood rapped the iron from the plane he was using, and began to whet it on the oilstone.

"I'm with you, Dorothy," he said, "but what are you going to do about it? Father has settled it in his mind that the major is wrong, and he's going to law about it down here in Alabama, just the same as he would back in New Hampshire. He isn't bitter about it, and he can't see why the major should be."

The bright-haired young girl sitting on the end of the workbench nodded her head emphatically.

"I know," she said. "But the major is bitter; he'd be untrue to all his traditions if he wasn't. Going to law with anybody down here is just like a declaration of war. The neighbors take it up on both sides, and there's no end of trouble. Just look at the Peterses and the Reeds! They're ready to fly at each other like cats and dogs all the time."

Tom laughed.

"If it comes to that it will be pretty one-sided with us," he said. "The Loudens used to own the whole valley before the war, and they set the pace for nearly everybody in it now. And as between the blue-blooded old major and a despised Yankee farmer, who persists in plowing deeper than his neighbors, and making money when everybody else is losing it—"

"Now, Tom, you know that isn't fair. We couldn't have been treated better anywhere than we were two years ago, when we came here with mother sick, and father discouraged, and everything so dreadfully dreary and—and tacky. Everybody was just as kind and thoughtful as could be. They never asked where we came from, and they didn't seem to care."

Tom's plane was curling long shavings from the edge of the board, and he laughed again. He was a broad-shouldered young fellow, with a resolute jaw and unafraid eyes, and laughing came easy to him.

"It costs a pet prejudice or two, but you're right, little sister. There is no north nor south any more. But that doesn't help us out of our tangle with the major."

"No; and it's such a little thing—a foot and a half of land on one side of an old field!"

"A foot and eight inches," Tom corrected. "But it's the principle of the thing with father. He believes he is right, and he is going to insist on that foot and eight inches, if it costs us every friend we have in the valley.

Dorothy's gaze went adrift out of the workshop window, wandering aimlessly until it alighted upon the bent figure of a man digging in a distant field.

"The dear old pater!" she said, softly. "He is so just and upright that he has quite forgotten how to be generous. If this dispute grows into a neighborhood quarrel, it will break mother's heart."

"That's so," said Tom; but he had no helpful suggestion to offer.

The young girl slipped down from her perch on the bench and went into the sweet May sunshine. She was a born peacemaker, and the threatened trouble made her heart ache. There were two young people at the great house on the knoll—the major's grandchildren—and everything had been so pleasant and happy until the boundary dispute had halved the apple of discord between the two families.

And now she knew that Kate Loudon and her brother would have to be loyal to their grandfather; and there would be no more quartette picnics to the "Pocket," nor carryall drives to Nick-a-Jack cave, nor Sunday evening hymn-singings around the old-fashioned grand piano in the Louden drawing-room. And her mother would have to be told; and the neighbors would take sides—against them, as Tom said; and the whole affair was altogether too miserable even to contemplate.

Her gaze went afield again, and sought and found the stooping figure in the distance. She thought it was her father, and went around through the orchard and out into the lane, meaning to take him unawares, and to try once more to dissuade him from his purpose. She came out opposite the bent figure in a thicket of old-field pines, and gave a little start of surprise when she discovered that the delver in her father's field was Maj. Loudon's grizzled old house-servant.

"Why, Uncle Pete!" she said; "what are you doing here?"

"I's a-doin' whut ol' Marse Loudon sent me ter do, Miss Dor'thy; and I's a-wishin' eve'y minute dat dishyer spade brek off short up to de han'le," said the old negro.

Then Dorothy looked over the fence and saw a row of freshly dug post-holes. The major had evidently taken the law into h's own hands and was going to make sure of the nine points of possession.

"Does my father know you are here?" she asked.

"No'm, I s'pect he don't. But I reckon he gwine find out 'fore long. I des been watchin' for him ter come t'arin' out dishyer way wid his gun eve'y minute."

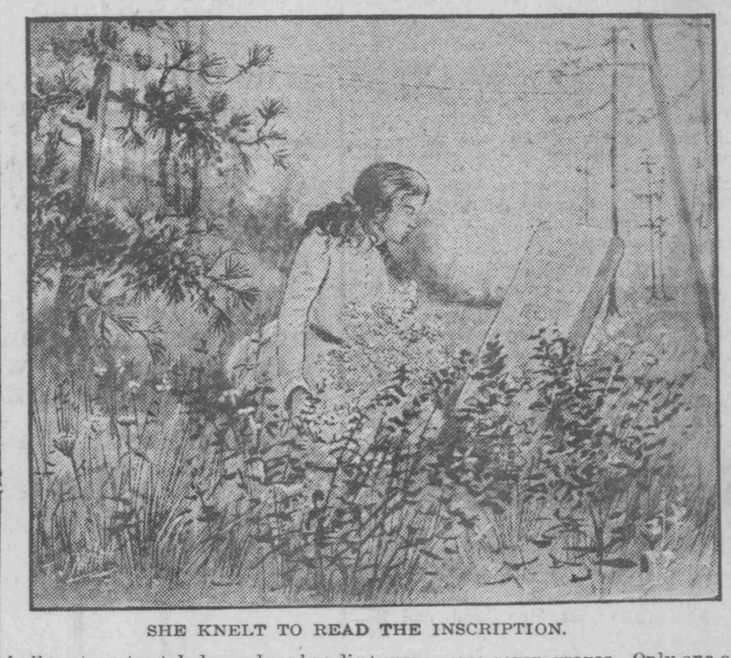
"You needn't be afraid. My father doesn't settle his difficulties with a gun. And, anyway, he wouldn't say anything to you."

The old negro leaned on his spade and glanced timorously over one shoulder toward the distant farmhouse, and over the other at the great house on the knoll.

"I's gwine tell you somepin, Miss Dor'thy, but you mus'n't never let on dat I tol' hit. Ol Marse Loudon he been hearin' dat your pa gwine do dis an' dat an' t'other, an' he get pow'ful troubled in his min'. He done let on to young Marse Percy like he gwine to run your pa cl'ar off'm dishyer place 'fore he get t'rough wid him."

"Why, uncle; how could he do that?"

"Deed, I don' know dat, Miss Dor'thy. 'Pears like de white folks kin do mos' anything dey wants ter. He say somepin 'about some ol' deed dat ain't been s'rend'ed yit; an' when he 'low dat, young Marse Percy he des up an' r'ar back an' Missy Kate she let on like she gwine ter cry. Den ol' Marse Robbut look like he gwine to brek somepin, an'



SHE KNELT TO READ THE INSCRIPTION.

holler at me ter tek de spade an' go dig dem postes-holes."

Dorothy turned away sick at heart. She remembered something about a flaw in the title; that there was an unrecorded gap in the transfers of the farm dating back to its purchase by some former owner many years before. It had been represented that the deed had been lost in the registrar's office, and her father had so far departed from his cautions custom as to accept the faulty title.

And now, out of this trivial contention over a bit of land barely wide enough to carry the boundary fence, was to grow a monstrous injustice which was to turn them out of house and home! Dorothy's breath came thick at the thought, but she was a brave girl, and she hastened home to do what she might before it should be to late.

She found her father in the stable putting the harness on one of the horses. There was stern determination written in every line of the fine old face.

"Where are you going, father?" she asked.

"To town, to swear out a warrant against Loudon for trespass," was the curt reply. "He has sent his man over to move that line fence."

"Oh, father, I wish you wouldn't! And on Memorial day, too! Surely we can afford to be generous on this day of all others."

"It isn't a question of generosity; I'd give him the land willingly if he needed it, but I won't let him take it when it doesn't belong to him."

"But, father, just think how kind they've all been to us since we came here, strangers in a strange land. Have you forgotten how Kate used to come over and sit up night after night with mother in that awful time two years ago? And how the major used to come twice a day to ask if there wasn't something he could do for us?"

The hard lines in her father's face melted ever so little, but he went on harnessing the horse.

"No, I haven't forgotten; and I'd do as much for him and his this minute. I'm not angry, child, but it's a matter of principle. In justice to you and Tom, and to your mother, I am bound to defend my legal rights."

"Please don't go to-day, father. Won't you wait just a little while? As it stands now the major is the aggressor, and I'm sure he'll be sorry if you'll only give him a little time to think about it."

For a moment she thought she had won. He paused with the bridle on his arm, grasping the horse's forelock. Then he shook his head and slipped the bridle into place.

"It's no use, Dorothy, girl. It's got to come, sooner or later, and I'd rather have it done and over with."

She let him go at that, but when he climbed to his seat in the sulky she gave him a parting word.

"Remember the day, father—we used to call it our 'forgiving day' at home. Think of the good things the major has done for us, and try to forgive him."

When he was gone she did not know what to do with herself. With the burden of the dreadful secret weighing upon her—the secret which she had not shared with her father for fear she should tempt him to forbear from unworthy motives—she dared not face her mother; and Tom's cheery whistle warned her off from the workshop.

She went to the gate and watched her father driving down the winding road. He was letting the horse walk, and as long as she could see him she fancied that his determination was wavering. When the sulky disappeared over the final hill she opened the gate and walked aimlessly in the opposite direction.

Her walk was a long one, and it led her far up the slopes of the great mountain which walls in the sheltered valley on the west. Near the cliff line she had stumbled upon a dell thickly starred with sweet-scented white azaleas; and remembering in the midst of her troubled musings her mother's fondness for this particular wild flower, she had filled her arms with the fragrant blooms.

She came out of the forest at the foot of the mountain into an open space which appeared to be an old field long uncultivated. It was in the little depression between the knoll and the mountain, and the Loudon orchard ran down to its farther edge. She could see the roof of the great house above the trees in the orchard, and thinking to save time she cut across the old field toward the road.

In mid-passage she came upon a low, curving mound, grass-grown and half hidden in a thicket of old-field pines. It was the remains of an old breastwork, and between the horns of the curve were seven graves. Only one of them was marked, and she knelt to read the inscription on the plain white headstone:

Sacred to the memory of
CAPTAIN ROBERT PERCY GORDON,
who, with six members of
his command, gave up his
life on this spot,
September 6, 1863,
while resisting the
advance of the Federal
Army of Invasion.

Dorothy's eyes were swimming when she finished. She was altogether of the other side; two uncles and her grandfather were of this same "Federal Army of Invasion," and these three slept among the heroes in the national cemetery at Chattanooga; but true heroism knows no political creed, and the tears came quickly when she pictured this little band of seven men lying behind the rude breastwork and yielding up their lives freely in the cause which they believed to be right.

"Poor fellows," she said, softly. "All these years you've been lying here forgotten in this lonely spot, and it is left for the daughter of those who fought against you to do you honor!"

Swiftly and with deft fingers she twined the starry azaleas into seven wreaths and laid them reverently upon the sunken mounds, leaving the last for the grave of the captain. When she rose her eyes were brimming again, and she saw but indistinctly the martial figure of the old major, standing in an attitude of reverence, with bowed head, the tips of his huge white mustache twitching curiously, and he seemed to be struggling for speech, and without knowing why, her heart went out to him.

"My dear young lady," he began, but something choked him and he had to try again. "Do you know who these men were? They were rebels; they died fighting for the 'Lost Cause.'"

"I know" she said, simply; "but they thought it was right; and they were brave men. And—and to-day is Memorial day."

The tips of the fierce white mustache twitched again, and the major took off his broad-brimmed hat with the most stately courtesy.

"Tell me, Miss Dorothy; did you come here to—" he could not finish, and she answered the unspoken question.

"Not purposely," she said. "I had been gathering wild flowers, and I came here quite by accident. I didn't know there was any one buried here."

The major cleared his throat and came around to stand beside her.

"We buried them just where they fell; it seemed most proper and fitting. They were on the picket line, and the order to fall back never reached them."

"Did you—did you know any of them?" she faltered.

The erect figure of the old soldier unbent at the question, and the major choked again.

"They were all old neighbors of mine," he repoined; "and this boy—this Capt. Robert Percy Gordon—was my sister's son and my name-child."

She started back at the word, and the miserable boundary wrangle came to its own again.

"Then this is your land! these are your—please forgive me, Maj. Loudon; I didn't know!"

The stately old man put on his hat with a bow that Lord Chesterfield might have envied. "It's getting right late, Miss Dorothy. Will you permit me to see you safe to your father's house?"

He tucked her arm under his own, and they went, not by the road, but up through the orchard and past the great house. At the side door which opened out of the library the major excused himself, and when he came out a moment afterward he was buttoning his coat.

Five minutes later they were crossing the road in front of the farmhouse, and the major's hand was on the gate latch when Dorothy's father drove up in the sulky. Nothwithstanding all that had befallen she expected an outburst of bitter words on one side or both, and caught her breath nervously. But there was no need.

"Good evening, Neighbor Hartwood," said the major, genially. "I just found your little gyerl here, projecting around in my old field, and I took the liberty, sah, of seeing her safe at home."

John Hartwood was a man of few words, but he climbed down from the sulky and made the proper acknowledgment of thanks.

"And while I'm here," the major went on, "there's a little matter of justice that I'd like to set right. A good many years ago, when I sold off this place to old Jeff Anderson, there was a deferred payment which was never made. Instead of taking a mortgage I merely withheld the deed; and when old Jeff died the matter was lost sight of—lost sight of completely, sah, till the other day when I happened to run across the deed among some old papers. It has just occurred to me, sah, that you need this deed to make your title good, and here it is."

John Hartwood took the deed, and while he was trying to find words in which to clothe a tumult of self-reproachful thoughts the major began again.

"And about that contemptible little boundary matter, two or three feet, more or less, shouldn't be allowed to come betwixt good neighbors. Let your fence stand right where it is, sah."

Whereat John Hartwood found speech at last. "No," he said, firmly. "I was all wrong in that, major—all wrong from the beginning, and I hope you will find it in your heart to forgive me. I examined the survey again to-day, and it's just the other way around; I'm on your land a foot and eight inches and—"

The interruption was the upcoming of old Uncle Peter, spade on shoulder.

"Evenin', Miss Dor'thy; evenin', Marse Ha'twood; evenin', Marse Robbut. I done dig all dem postes-holes—"

The major broke in with an explosion:

"Why, you white-headed old scoundrel!—go back thah and fill up those holes before I skin you alive, sah! Appears to me you're getting mighty childish in your old age—it does, for a fact!"

Dorothy slipped away in the midst of the explosion, and a few minutes later she had stripped her cherished "La Neige" of its wealth of snow-white blooms, and was flitting through the old orchard with her arms laden with the fragrant burden. The twilight was mellowing into night when she reached the graves in the old rifle pit, but there was light enough to serve her purpose. When she had added her thank-offering of roses to the wreathes of azaleas she had put there before, she stood beside the grave of the young captain.

"Good-night," she said, softly. "On that awful September morning long ago you fought against us. But to-day you've fought for us. Good-night, brave soldiers!"—Ladies' Home Journal.